

7 determining whether to extend said second closing time based on said extended first closing time; and

extending said second closing time in accordance with said determination.

106. The method of claim 105, wherein said extending said first closing time comprises:
determining whether an overtime trigger condition occurs prior to said first closing time;

and

adding a first overtime interval to said first closing time.

Sub E1
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107. The method of claim 106, wherein said determining comprises:
calculating a first time interval between said extended first closing time and said second closing time; and

determining whether said first time interval is less than a second time interval.

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108. The method of claim 107, wherein said second time interval represents a minimum time interval between said first and second closing times.

Sub E2
109. The method of claim 107, wherein said first time interval is less than said second time interval, and said extending said second closing time comprises adding a second overtime interval to said second closing time.

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110. The method of claim 109, wherein said first overtime interval is equal to said second overtime interval.

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411. The method of claim 109, wherein said first overtime interval is different from said second overtime interval.

Sub E3
112. The method of claim 106, wherein said overtime trigger condition is at least one of a group comprising a ranking criterion, a quality criterion and a bid group characteristic.

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113. The method of claim 112, wherein said ranking criterion is at least one of a group comprising a best bid and a predetermined rank from said best bid.

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114. The method of claim 112, wherein said quality criterion is at least one of a group comprising a bid price, a bid price within a predetermined absolute difference from a best bid price, a bid price within a predetermined percentage difference from said best bid price, and a bid from an incumbent potential bidder.

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115. The method of claim 112, wherein said bid group characteristic comprises at least one of a group comprising an increase in frequency of bids, a statistical analysis of bid prices received from a group of potential bidders and a statistical analysis of bid prices received from one potential bidder.

116. The method of claim 105, further comprising:
setting a third closing time for a third lot;
determining whether to extend said third closing time based on said extended second closing time; and

- extending said third closing time in accordance with said determination.
117. A machine-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to control closing times in an online auction, comprising:
- setting a first closing time for a first lot and a second closing time for a second lot;
 - extending said first closing time;
 - determining whether to extend said second closing time based on said extended first closing time; and
 - extending said second closing time in accordance with said determination.
118. The machine-readable medium of claim 117, wherein said extending said first closing time comprises:
- determining whether an overtime trigger condition occurs prior to said first closing time;
 - and
 - adding a first overtime interval to said first closing time.
119. The machine-readable medium of claim 118, wherein said determining comprises:
- calculating a first time interval between said extended first closing time and said second closing time; and
 - determining whether said first time interval is less than a second time interval.
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120. The machine-readable medium of claim ¹⁰119, wherein said second time interval represents a minimum time interval between said first and second closing times.

Sub 95
121. The machine-readable medium of claim 119, wherein said first time interval is less than said second time interval, and said extending said second closing time comprises adding a second overtime interval to said second closing time.

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122. The machine-readable medium of claim 121, wherein said first overtime interval is equal to said second overtime interval.

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123. The machine-readable medium of claim 121, wherein said first overtime interval is different from said second overtime interval.

C Sub 117
124. The machine-readable medium of claim 118, wherein said overtime trigger condition is at least one of a group comprising a ranking criterion, a quality criterion and a bid group characteristic.

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125. The machine-readable medium of claim 124, wherein said ranking criterion is at least one of a group comprising a best bid and a predetermined rank from said best bid.

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126. The machine-readable medium of claim 124, wherein said quality criterion is at least one of a group comprising a bid price, a bid price within a predetermined absolute difference from a best bid price, a bid price within a predetermined percentage difference from said best bid price, and a bid from an incumbent potential bidder.